

The Distinctive Space and Energy Flow of George Ho's Painting

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The **Curiosities In Gifting and Receiving** exhibition encapsulates artist George Ho's painting over the period of 2023-25. In his Artist's Statement, Ho stressed that for him artistic creation is a "performance of energy"¹. These paintings express the purest colors, forms, brushstrokes, and compositional spaces to bring about the dynamic flow of energy.

The exhibition includes two series of paintings, *Curiosities In Gifting and Receiving* (2023) and *Alchemy of Time* (2025). In his Artist's Statement he noted that his creative approach began to germinate in 2018 with *The Indefinite Reveal* series, for which he first employed the use of sheets of Lutradur, large non-woven polyester material. After pre-visualization and -planning, he began painting randomly on the canvas, not only working with no set topics or motifs, but making sure to prevent any pre-conceived consciousness from manifesting, so as to permit free rotation of the canvas and the painting in any direction. The translucent quality of the polyester fiber surface renders visible the cumulative traces of the act of painting - brushwork, color, line, and stroke - while the application of paint remains consistently thin, producing a luminous, layered effect.

Next, he cuts the large painted surfaces into pieces of varying sizes, which are then recombined through a second layering of canvases, producing complex strata of pictorial and spatial depth. In both series, the application of gold leaf is reserved for the final stage, imparting a decisive highlight that completes the work. Viewers can observe overlapping translucent planes of colors and lines, generating a multilayered spatiality. I have termed this luminous layering "virtual space" - the spatial structure arising both from the

¹ George Ho, Artist's Statement: "Exploring a Future of Infinite Possibility", 2025. All references to the Artist's Statement in this essay refer to this essay.

composition of the image and from the dual-sided application of color. It also evokes the sequential traces of painting across different temporal registers, ultimately integrated into a coexistence reminiscent of parallel time frames.

This distinctive approach allows the artist's practice to encompass the capture of the moment, expression, cutting, and synthesis of a flowing sense of time, with each series representing the outcome of a sustained painting process. From the viewer's perspective, the progression from *Curiosities* to *The Alchemy of Time* reflects an ongoing interplay of temporal fragments, shattering the constraints of linear time. Another crucial point of entry that bridges the two series lies in the artist's notion of the "performance of energy."

Pictorial Exploration of Energy Imagery

From the perspective of the artist's trajectory since 1992, I have divided it into three stages. The first stage, 1992–2003, "From Symbolism to the Psychic Landscape," began with paintings that addressed the theme of trauma, in which symbolic imagery served as the key element of pictorial narration. The second stage, 2004–2013, may be described as a search for the "energy imagery," in which the artist developed graphic energetic depictions through the use of the golden ratio and sacred geometry. The third phase, from 2013 to the present, is characterized as the phase of "Flowing Codes." Here the artist adopts "being question" - the act of questioning - as a method of practice. Across these three stages, the evolving imagery has become a medium through which he investigates the reality of art and life.

Given the limited scope of this essay, I will concentrate on elaborating on the second and third stages of his creative pursuit with painting. The second stage marks the artist's initial exploration of energy imagery.

In 2004, with the series *Returning to the Mystical Realm of Classical Narrative*, the artist began to incorporate the compositional idioms of Japanese folding screens. At the same time, he began working on unusual translucent polyester Lutradur canvases, producing colors of incandescent clarity with a pervasive luminosity. I believe that the luminance and tranquility imparted by

his paintings marked the turning point towards his exploration of energy imagery.

The 2005 installation *Illuminated Handscroll of Light* combined the symbolic imagery of the reclining Buddha and the heart chakra with writing resembling manuscript texts. Executed in unusual pearlescent pigments, under lighting they reflect as a silvery screen, and under diminished frontal light and backlighting they reveal subtle chromatic variations of blue and gold. The entire work appeared as sandwiched between layers, embodying delicate states of chromatic and formal transformation.

The 2008 series *Hall of Records*, consisting of 39 panels, employs the golden ratio to create a pictorial order resonant with the principles of Gestalt psychology. In this writer's view, the use of multiple lexigrams, and techniques ranging from embroidery to folding screens and hanging scrolls, reflects the artist's sustained engagement with the cultural history of images. In 2011, the series *Blooming, No Blossoms* developed multiple forms of the flower motif through golden ratio constructions and sacred geometry, articulated across multiple spatial layers. The artist first painted numerous floral designs, then cut them into square panels according to the ratio 1:1.618. The 2012 series *Manifestations · Joy* extended these explorations by deploying the "energy triangle," generating rich permutations between organic and geometric forms. The resulting ensemble of paintings carried an atmosphere of mystery and a sacred sense of harmonic spectrum.

The third stage of his practice introduced installation strategies into painting. The 2013-14 series *Space of Wonder* comprises thirteen large-scale circular mandalas. Taking the life path number nine as the starting point, the artist determined color and compositional order with the throw of dice. With this series he began painting on the reverse side of the specialized polyester materials, allowing the overlap of front and back imagery to create a denser interplay of parallel layers of light and color.

George Ho began lending the expression of multi-layered parallel spaces to

his paintings following the first stage in 1998, with gradual development toward “virtual space” - the characteristic addition of linear expression to the images. This spatial logic expanded in the second stage through the incorporation of the golden ratio, Gestalt principles, energy triangles, lexigrams, floral motifs, and mandalas.

In the third stage, *Space of Wonder* (2013-14) was presented in two different installation formats. In one, the 13 works were suspended in a circular sequence surrounding a central singing bowl, which visitors were invited to strike. In another, the works were installed vertically in a rectilinear array, with singing bowls placed at the front and rear. The artist performed by striking the bowl at the front, while a collaborator answered each strike with a corresponding sound from the rear, creating a cyclical interplay of image and sound.

A defining feature of this third stage, which I term “flowing codes,” lies in the artist’s use of chance operations. In *Space of Wonder*, the roll of dice determined compositional elements, displacing the artist’s intentionality and yielding paintings of pure abstraction in form and color. Works such as *The Excavated Essay* - a series executed on laminated glass - extend this tendency, with golden strokes flashing across parallel pictorial layers, all encompassed within the luminous field of the glass medium.

The solo exhibition *Being Question* (Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, 2019) constructed an immersive array in which viewers could move among the works. The artist invited vocalist Mia Hsieh to improvise vocal harmonies while moving about the installation, generating a performance of varied cadence and dynamics entitled *Touch · Listen*. The theme of “being question” links to the 2018 series *Passages*, the 2019 series *The Indefinite Reveal*, and even the 2022 series *Invitation from Simultaneity*. In each case, the act of painting was framed as an open question posed to the canvas. Composition and purpose were not predetermined; instead, the canvas was approached as an interlocutor, invited into a process of unfolding possibility.

In my view, the graphic characteristics developed into “virtual space” in the first stage progressed into the more luminous, transparent spatiality of stage two, where imagery and color were explored as pure energy. This phase marked a turn from personal experience toward questions of artistic essence and value. In stage three, following up became questioning, opening the encounter between self and world to an infinite field of potential. This openness also underpins the two series presented in the current exhibition, which the artist describes as grounded in the expression and performance of pure energy.

The method of ‘questioning’ in the third stage, as the artist notes in his statement, emerged after his engagement with Access Consciousness, an energy system that involves lightly touching 32 energy points on the head to release limiting beliefs and emotions. He applied this method as a means of connecting with the world, and as a principle of openness in painting. He rarely sets predetermined themes, motifs, or concepts for his painting, rather opening up space to elaborate freely in his painting through the process of continuous questioning, allowing perceptual impressions of the moment to flow through the creative space.

Seen in retrospect, the second stage of his practice already reflected a concern with generating energy imagery through Gestalt images, the golden ratio, and sacred geometry. After encountering the energy discipline of Access Consciousness in the third phase, his painting further progressed towards the “performance of energy.” In the latest exhibition, each of the two series is marked by a distinctive chromatic tonality, perhaps reflecting the natural inflection of his inner state at different stages of life.

Through the openness of questioning, his painting no longer stresses self-intention or predetermined themes, opening up “space.” This “space” can be said to be “virtual space” - that being space at a non-physical level, or ether. In another sense, space signifies a movement from “sense of self” towards non-selfhood, akin to Carl Gustav Jung’s account of the transition from ego to self: the attempt to relinquish self-centered intentionality in favor of an invisible

connection with nature and the cosmos. Such characteristics resonate with the artist's own discourse on his artistic pursuit - towards the exploration of a future of infinite possibility.